



Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa



EDICT OF GOVERNMENT



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COMESA 029 (2004) (English): Standard for
Canned Sardines and Sardine- Type Products



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**COMESA HARMONISED
STANDARD**

**COMESA/DHS
029: 2004**

**Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-
Type Products**

REFERENCE: DHS 029: 2004

Foreword

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was established in 1994 as a regional economic grouping consisting of 20 member states after signing the co-operation Treaty. In Chapter 15 of the COMESA Treaty, Member States agreed to co-operate on matters of standardisation and Quality assurance with the aim of facilitating the faster movement of goods and services within the region so as to enhance expansion of intra-COMESA trade and industrial expansion.

Co-operation in standardisation is expected to result into having uniformly harmonised standards. Harmonisation of standards within the region is expected to reduce Technical Barriers to Trade that are normally encountered when goods and services are exchanged between COMESA Member States due to differences in technical requirements. Harmonized COMESA Standards are also expected to result into benefits such as greater industrial productivity and competitiveness, increased agricultural production and food security, a more rational exploitation of natural resources among others.

COMESA Standards are developed by the COMESA experts on standards representing the National Standards Bodies and other stakeholders within the region in accordance with international procedures and practices. Standards are approved by circulating Final Draft Harmonized Standards (FDHS) to all member states for a one Month vote. The assumption is that all contentious issues would have been resolved during the previous stages or that an international or regional standard being adopted has been subjected through a development process consistent with accepted international practice.

COMESA Standards are subject to review, to keep pace with technological advances. Users of the COMESA Harmonized Standards are therefore expected to ensure that they always have the latest version of the standards they are implementing.

This COMESA standard is technically identical to the Codex Standard *CODEX STAN 94 –1981 REV. 1-1995*.

<p>A COMESA Harmonized Standard does not purport to include all necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.</p>
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CODEX STANDARD FOR CANNED SARDINES AND SARDINE-TYPE PRODUCTS**CODEX STAN 94 –1981 REV. 1-1995****1. SCOPE**

This standard applies to canned sardines and sardine-type products packed in water or oil or other suitable packing medium. It does not apply to speciality products where fish content constitute less than 50% m/m of the net contents of the can.

2. DESCRIPTION**2.1 PRODUCT DEFINITION**

2.1.1 Canned sardines or sardine type products are prepared from fresh or frozen fish of the following species:

- *Sardina pilchardus*
- *Sardinops melanostictus*, *S. neopilchardus*, *S. ocellatus*, *S. sagax* *S. caeruleus*,
- *Sardinella aurita*, *S. brasiliensis*, *S. maderensis*, *S. longiceps*, *S. gibbosa*
- *Clupea harengus*
- *Sprattus sprattus*
- *Hyperlophus vittatus*
- *Nematalosa vlaminghi*
- *Etrumeus teres*
- *Ethmidium maculatum*
- *Engraulis anchoita*, *E. mordax*, *E. ringens*
- *Opisthonema oglinum*

2.1.2 Head and gills shall be completely removed; scales and/or tail may be removed. The fish may be eviscerated. If eviscerated, it shall be practically free from visceral parts other than roe, milt or kidney. If ungutted, it shall be practically free from undigested feed or used feed.

2.2 PROCESS DEFINITION

The products are packed in hermetically sealed containers and shall have received a processing treatment sufficient to ensure commercial sterility.

2.3 PRESENTATION

Any presentation of the product shall be permitted provided that it:

- (i) contains at least two fish in each can; and
- (ii) meets all requirements of this standard; and
- (iii) is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer;
- (iv) contain only one fish species.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 RAW MATERIAL

The products shall be prepared from sound fish of the species listed under sub-section 2.1 which are of a quality fit to be sold fresh for human consumption.

3.2 OTHER INGREDIENTS

The packing medium and all other ingredients used shall be of food grade quality and conform to all applicable Codex standards.

3.3. DECOMPOSITION

The products shall not contain more than 10 mg/100 g of histamine based on the average of the sample unit tested.

3.4 FINAL PRODUCT

Products shall meet the requirements of this Standard when lots examined in accordance with Section 9 comply with provisions set out in Section 8. Product shall be examined by the methods given in Section 7.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Only the use of the following additives is permitted.

Additive	Maximum Level in the Final Product
<u>Thickening or Gelling Agents</u>	
(for use in packing media only)	
400 Alginic acid	GMP
401 Sodium alginate	
402 Potassium alginate	
404 Calcium alginate	
406 Agar	
407 Carrageenan and its Na, K, and NH ₄ salts (including furcelleran	
407 Processed <i>Eucheuma</i> Seaweed (PES)	
410 Carob bean gum	
412 Guar gum	
413 Tragacanth gum	
415 Xanthan gum	
440 Pectins	
466 Sodium carboxymethylcellulose	
<u>Modified Starches</u>	
1401 Acid treated starches (including white and yellow dextrins)	GMP
1402 Alkaline treated starches	
1404 Oxidized starches	
1410 Monostarch phosphate	
1412 Distarch phosphate, esterified	
1414 Acetylated distarch phosphate	
1413 Phosphated distarch phosphate	
1420/1421 Starch acetate	

1422	Acetylated distarch adipate	
1440	Hydroxypropyl starch	
1442	Hydroxypropyl starch phosphate	

Acidity Regulators

260	Acetic acid	
270	Lactic acid (L-, D-, and DL-)	
330	Citric acid	

GMP

Natural Flavours

Spice oils	
Spice extracts	
Smoke flavours (Natural smoke solutions and extracts)	

GMP

5. HYGIENE AND HANDLING

5.1 The final product shall be free from any foreign material that poses a threat to human health.

5.2 When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination as prescribed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the product:

- (i) shall be free from micro-organisms capable of development under normal conditions of storage;
- (ii) no sample unit shall contain histamine that exceeds 20mg per 100 g;
- (iii) shall not contain any other substance including substances derived from microorganisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to health in accordance with standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- (iv) shall be free from container integrity defects which may compromise the hermetic seal.

5.3 It is recommended that the product covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3-1997) and the following relevant Codes:

- (i) the Recommended International Code of Practice for Canned Fish (CAC/RCP 10-1976);
- (ii) the Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods (CAC/RCP 23-1979);

6. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 3-1999) the following specific provisions apply:

6.1 NAME OF THE FOOD

The name of the product shall be:

- 6.1.1
- (i) "Sardines" (to be reserved exclusively for *Sardina pilchardus* (Walbaum)); or
 - (ii) "X sardines" of a country, a geographic area, the species, or the common name of the species in accordance with the law and custom of the country in which the product is sold, and in a manner not to mislead the consumer.

6.1.2 The name of the packing medium shall form part of the name of the food.

6.1.3 If the fish has been smoked or smoke flavoured, this information shall appear on the label in close proximity to the name.

6.1.4 In addition, the label shall include other descriptive terms that will avoid misleading or confusing the consumer.

7. SAMPLING, EXAMINATION AND ANALYSES

7.1 SAMPLING

- (i) Sampling of lots for examination of the final product as prescribed in Section 3.3 shall be in accordance with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (AQL-6.5) (Ref. CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (ii) Sampling of lots for examination of net weight and drained weight where appropriate shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan meeting the criteria established by the CAC.

7.2 SENSORIC AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Samples taken for sensoric and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination and in accordance with Annex A and the *Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories (CAC/GL 31 - 1999)*.

7.3 DETERMINATION OF NET WEIGHT

Net contents of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedure:

- (i) Weigh the unopened container.
- (ii) Open the container and remove the contents.
- (iii) Weigh the empty container, (including the end) after removing excess liquid and adhering meat.
- (iv) Subtract the weight of the empty container from the weight of the unopened container. The resultant figure will be the net content.

7.4 DETERMINATION OF DRAINED WEIGHT

The drained weight of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedure:

- (i) Maintain the container at a temperature between 20°C and 30°C for a minimum of 12 hours prior to examination.
- (ii) Open and tilt the container to distribute the contents on a pre-weighed circular sieve which consists of wire mesh with square openings of 2.8 mm x 2.8 mm.
- (iii) Incline the sieve at an angle of approximately 17-20° and allow the fish to drain for two minutes, measured from the time the product is poured into the sieve.
- (iv) Weigh the sieve containing the drained fish.
- (v) The weight of drained fish is obtained by subtracting the weight of the sieve from the weight of the sieve and drained product.

7.5 PROCEDURE FOR PACKS IN SAUCES (WASHED DRAINED WEIGHT)

- (i) Maintain the container at a temperature between 20°C and 30°C for a minimum of 12 hours prior to examination.
- (ii) Open and tilt the container and wash the covering sauce and then the full contents with hot tap water (approx. 40°C), using a wash bottle (e.g. plastic) on the tared circular sieve.
- (iii) Wash the contents of the sieve with hot water until free of adhering sauce; where necessary separate optional ingredients (spices, vegetables, fruits) with pincers. Incline the sieve at an angle of approximately 17-20° and allow the fish to drain two minutes, measured from the time the washing procedure has finished.
- (iv) Remove adhering water from the bottom of the sieve by use of paper towel. Weigh the sieve containing the washed drained fish.
- (v) The washed drained weight is obtained by subtracting the weight of the sieve from the weight of the sieve and drained product.

7.6 DETERMINATION OF HISTAMINE

AOAC 977.13 (15th Edition, 1990)

8. DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES

A sample unit will be considered defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

8.1 FOREIGN MATTER

The presence in the sample unit of any matter, which has not been derived from the fish or the packing media, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing and sanitation practices.

8.2 ODOUR/FLAVOUR

A sample unit affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours indicative of decomposition or rancidity.

8.3 TEXTURE

- (i) Excessively mushy flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation.
- (ii) Excessively tough or fibrous flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation.

8.4 DISCOLOURATION

A sample unit affected by distinct discolouration indicative of decomposition or rancidity or by sulphide staining of more than 5% of the fish by weight in the sample unit.

8.5 OBJECTIONABLE MATTER

A sample unit affected by Struvite crystals - any struvite crystal greater than 5 mm in length.

9. LOT ACCEPTANCE

A lot will be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- (i) the total number of defectives as classified according to section 8 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan in the Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (AQL-6.5) (CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (ii) the total number of sample units not meeting the presentation defined in 2.3 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan in the Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (AQL-6.5) (CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (iii) the average net weight or the average drained weight where appropriate of all sample units examined is not less than the declared weight, and provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any individual container;
- (iv) the Food Additives, Hygiene and Labelling requirements of Sections 3.3, 4, 5.1, 5.2 and 6 are met.

ANNEX "A": SENSORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

1. Complete external can examination for the presence of container integrity defects or can ends which may be distorted outwards.
2. Open can and complete weight determination according to defined procedures in Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5.
3. Carefully remove product and examine for discolouration, foreign matter and struvite crystals. The presence of a hard bone is an indicator of underprocessing and will require an evaluation for sterility.
4. Assess odour, flavour and texture in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories (CAC/GL 31-1999)*